

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**August 31, 2005**

## **SUPREME COURT FILLS VACANCY IN FOURTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT**

The Illinois Supreme Court announced Wednesday the appointment of Effingham attorney Kevin S. Parker as resident judge in Jasper County in the Fourth Judicial Circuit.

Mr. Parker, 46, a fourth generation Illinois attorney and two term state's attorney in Effingham County, will fill a vacancy created by the retirement of Judge Michael R. Weber.

Mr. Parker's appointment was recommended to the Supreme Court by Justice Lloyd A. Karmeier following a review process by a special committee established for that purpose.

"I am extremely pleased to find a willing and duly qualified candidate in Mr. Parker, who has family and professional roots in the area," Justice Karmeier said. "He will bring to the bench the background of his years as a former state's attorney, experience in juvenile matters and the breadth of a private practicing attorney."

The search for a qualified resident judge was complicated by the fact that Jasper is a small county in the southeastern part of the state with a population under 11,000 and with only three resident licensed attorneys. Seven lawyers, including residents and non-residents of the county, submitted applications for the position and were interviewed by the committee.

After the committee completed its review, however, two of the candidates withdrew their names from consideration for personal reasons, leaving only non-Jasper County residents among those recommended by the Committee.

By statute, a resident judge must live in the county at the time the appointment becomes effective. Mr. Parker said he will relocate his family to Jasper County to comply with that requirement.

Justice Karmeier said he was particularly impressed with the character of Mr. Parker as measured by a tragedy in his young life. When he was 20, his parents, James and Patricia Parker, were killed in an automobile accident and it fell to him to finish raising his three younger siblings.

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“Despite that burden, he was able to complete college in Ohio and then go on to law school, taking his youngest sister to live with him in Indiana while he completed his law degree,” said Justice Karmeier. “It was a formidable challenge, and his ability to overcome that challenge strikes me as a compelling measure of his character, compassion and determination.”

His sister, Kimberly Koester, later became Jasper County state’s attorney.

Mr. Parker is a native of Effingham County, adjacent to Jasper County; and for the past 17 years his practice has been concentrated in the Fourth Judicial Circuit.

Mr. Parker was elected Effingham County state’s attorney in 1992, and re-elected for a second term in 1996. He returned to private practice in Effingham in 2000, with an emphasis on general legal matters and also serving as a private attorney public defender when called upon in juvenile cases.

He began the practice of law in 1984, following his graduation from the Valparaiso University School of Law. He is licensed to practice law in Illinois, Missouri and Ohio.

After graduating from Effingham High School, Mr. Parker attended and graduated from Miami University in Oxford, Ohio. Before successfully running for state’s attorney of Effingham County, he practiced law in Effingham with the Taylor Law Offices; and in Ohio and in St. Louis.

“I am humbled by the opportunity to serve the people of south central and southeastern Illinois where I grew up and worked professionally for the past 17 years,” said Mr. Parker. “I am very grateful and appreciative of the confidence shown in me by the Illinois Supreme Court and by Justice Karmeier. I am eager for Jasper County to become home for my family and will strive daily to be a dedicated servant to its people.”

Mr. Parker is the father of two daughters.

His appointment will take effect September 19, 2005, giving Mr. Parker time to conclude affairs with his current law practice and find residence in Jasper County. His appointment runs until December 4, 2006; Mr. Parker has said he will be a candidate for the same judicial seat in 2006.

The Fourth Judicial Circuit is composed of nine counties: Jasper, Effingham, Clay, Fayette, Marion, Clinton, Christian, Montgomery and Shelby.

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The chair of Justice Karameier's evaluation and screening committee was Matthew R. Hortenstine, a partner with Taylor Law Offices in Effingham. Other members of the committee were John A. Clark, a senior lawyer with Croegaert, Clark & Hough Ltd., in Olney; William G. Heap, a partner with Cox, Phillips, Weber, Tedford & Heap, a law firm with offices in Newton, Robinson and Oblong; J. Michael Neal, an attorney with Cunningham & Neal in Lawrenceville; and Robert G. Coble, a partner with Coble & Milone in Flora.